

Today's News - Thursday, April 25, 2013

- An absolutely fascinating (and totally depressing) report about what is happening to Sochi as Russia builds huge projects for the 2014 Winter Olympics: "Money has taken over Sochi. They've beaten all the beauty and the love out of our city."
- Hollis uses Hurricane Sandy and Chicago's deadly 1995 heat wave to paint "a bleak condemnation of our urban future" unless we get our act together: "Whether the city becomes our ark rather than our concrete coffin is up to us."
- Betsky, as part of the Holcim Conference on Sustainable Construction, visits the "creative engine at the heart of Mumbai," the Dharavi slum, and comes away "exhilarated and troubled - the cost in human life is too high a price to pay for the incredible ingenuity of Dharavi."
- Lutyens' Delhi is (once again) under threat of high-rise development, with preservationists hoping for UNESCO World Heritage Site status: "It's our values against those of the developers and the moneybags. It's a tough battle."
- Hopes are high (but are they promising) that the re-birth of a 1921 Parisian movie palace can revive the neighborhood (san bodyguards).
- Grabar offers an architectural reflection on a presidency: "After a presidency as polarizing as they come, the Bush Center is the opposite of divisive. But forward-looking? It's hard to find any elements of the design that point forward."
- Wainwright is at his anthropomorphic best after his encounter with Leeds' new arena: besides being "bold, brazen bling on a budget," it is a "mysterious green creature rearing its scaly head like a supersized robot aphid, come to take over the city" (he basically likes it).
- Brussat ponders the next new plan for Providence's Kennedy Plaza: it "owes an intellectual debt to the New Urbanist movement (that is, the old urbanism)...it is a serious plan based on important new ideas about urban design."
- Pearman pays tribute to Rick Mather: he "had long been a quietly authoritative presence in British architecture; one hopes his influence will persist" (and "always suavely, preppily American, he was excellent company").
- A "Pritzker chat" between Mayne and Ito re: what does being an "architect's architect" mean (and much more).
- Sullivan tackles the conundrum of black architects in America: "Why isn't there a U.S. equivalent of Adjaye among our ranks?"
- In South Africa, the Wits University Corobrik Architectural Student Award goes to Mhlungu: "she is the first black student to bag the honor" (we cheer the "she" part, too).
- A new architecture magazine launches in China, run from the Department of Architecture at Xian Jiaotong-Liverpool University; and headed by Austin Williams and Theodoros Dounas (all good wishes to them!).
- Call for entries reminder (deadline looms!): 5th Annual Contract Inspirations Awards recognizing social responsibility in interior design.

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Russia's Olympic City: Russia is pushing ahead with projects for the 2014 Winter Olympics. But not everyone is happy...authorities are resettling over 2,000 families who happened to live in the path of huge Olympic projects...The people whose lives have been turned upside down...have been given no alternatives..."Money has taken over Sochi. They've beaten all the beauty and the love out of our city." By Anna Nemtsova - Foreign Policy magazine

The future of the city: Most of us now live in cities, so it is within the metropolis that our future salvation or death warrant will be drafted...we seem largely incapable of readying ourselves for the unexpected...Whether the city becomes our ark rather than our concrete coffin is up to us. By Leo Hollis - Aeon Magazine (UK)

Slumdog Entrepreneur: The cost in human life is too high a price to pay for the incredible ingenuity of Dharavi...I felt exhilarated and troubled...there is order and rule and logic to every aspect of Dharavi. Yet the horrors of life there are very real and evident...Change is on the horizon...The place might not exist in a few years. By Aaron Betsky - Architect Magazine

Land famine threatens Delhi's colonial heritage of Lutyens architecture: Indian authorities propose high-rise homes in area of 1920s and 30s bungalows designed by Edwin Lutyens...conservationists hope that Unesco will give Lutyens' Delhi coveted world heritage site status...This would make radical change almost impossible. - Guardian (UK)

Luxor-on-Seine: The Louxor Palais du Cinema [1921]...was once one of the jewels of Egyptian-inspired art deco...The intention behind a project...is as much social as artistic...Parisians believe in the redemptive power of cinema...For all its beauty and good intentions, the new Louxor may prove to be a destination for trendy bien-pensants (especially those with bodyguards) rather than genuine locals. -- Philippe Pumain Architecte - The Economist (UK)

An Architectural Reflection of George W. Bush: After a presidency as polarizing as they come, the Bush Center is the opposite of divisive...But forward-looking? It's hard to find any elements of the design that point forward... By Henry Grabar -- Robert A.M. Stern; Michael Van Valkenburgh [images] - The Atlantic Cities

Leeds Arena: giant mint helmet or technicolour dreamboat? Bold, brazen and bling, Leeds' £60m new venue looks like a giant bug -- but is a strangely appropriate addition to the city...A mysterious green creature...rearing its scaly head...with rows of hexagonal eyes...like a supersized robot aphid, come to take over the city...one of the oddest looking buildings the region has ever seen. By Oliver Wainwright -- Acme; Populous [images] - Guardian (UK)

A greater Kennedy Plaza, yet again: The plan owes an intellectual debt to the New Urbanist movement (that is, the old urbanism) and the pedestrian-friendly ideas of the Project for Public Spaces...design is elegant, but the plan is not complete...Still, it is a serious plan based on important new ideas about urban design. By David Brussat -- Union Studio Architecture & Community Design [images] - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Rick (Richard Martin) Mather, 1937-2013: The U.S.-born, London-based architect pursued a contextual modernism that smartly bridged different eras...[he] had long been a quietly authoritative presence in British architecture; one hopes his influence will persist. Hugh Pearman [slide show] - Architectural Record

Pritzker Chat: Thom Mayne Interviews Toyo Ito: The 2013 AIA Gold Medal winner talks with the 2013 Pritzker Prize winner...Mayne describes Ito as an "architect's architect"...the two discuss what that means. [video] - Architect Magazine

Toward a blacker architecture in America: Black architects have gotten lots of press for the failures of the profession...Why isn't there a U.S. equivalent of Adjaye among our ranks? The closest we've come to our own Adjaye might have been Paul Revere Williams... By C.C. Sullivan -- Haley Simmons; Curtis Moody/Moody Nolan; Zevilla Jackson Preston/Arch527; Philip Freelon/Freelon Group; David Adjaye [images] - SmartPlanet

Architect's beautiful asylum: Nontokozo Mhlungu's postgraduate work [Hillside Sanctuary] has won her the Wits University Corobrik Architectural Student Award...she is the first black student to bag the honour. -- University of the Witwatersrand; DSA Architects - The Times (Johannesburg)

Magazine Launch: MPTF [masterplanning the future] is the new architecture magazine in China. It is run from the department of Architecture at Xian Jiaotong-Liverpool University; Austin Williams and Theodoros Dounas, Editors-in-chief- MPTF [masterplanning the future]

Call for entries deadline reminder: 5th Annual Contract Inspirations Awards recognizing social responsibility for interior projects designed for non-profit clients or other clients of a good cause; cash grants; deadline: May 3- Contract magazine

Overdrive: L.A.'s Future is Present in its Past: Simultaneously hopeful and wistful, The Getty Museum's exhibition is about the evolution of a modern city seen through its architecture, confirming the truly layered nature of Los Angeles. By Julie D. Taylor [images] - ArchNewsNow



-- Hodgetts + Fung: Sinclair Garden Pavilion, Pasadena, California,
-- Lundgaard & Tranberg: Tietgen Dormitory, Copenhagen, Denmark
-- Tadao Ando: Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany

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